

Development of the Strategic Research Plan for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Conservation in New South Wales, 2004-2009

Steven J. Kennelly and Tracey A. McVea

NSW Department of Primary Industries
Cronulla Fisheries Centre
PO Box 21, Cronulla, NSW, 2230
Australia

FINAL REPORT

FRDC Project No. 2004/311

April 2005



NSW DEPARTMENT OF
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES



Australian Government
**Fisheries Research and
Development Corporation**

Development of the Strategic Research Plan for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Conservation in New South Wales, 2004-2009

November 2004

Authors: Kennelly, S, J. and McVea, T.A.
Published By: NSW Department of Primary Industries (now incorporating NSW Fisheries)
Postal Address: Cronulla Fisheries Centre, PO Box 21, NSW, 2230
Internet: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au

© NSW Department of Primary Industries and the Fisheries Research & Development Corporation

This work is copyright. Except as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part of this reproduction may be reproduced by any process, electronic or otherwise, without the specific written permission of the copyright owners. Neither may information be stored electronically in any form whatsoever without such permission.

DISCLAIMER

The publishers do not warrant that the information in this report is free from errors or omissions. The publishers do not accept any form of liability, be it contractual, tortious or otherwise, for the contents of this report for any consequences arising from its use or any reliance placed on it. The information, opinions and advice contained in this report may not relate to, or be relevant to, a reader's particular circumstance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	I
NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY	II
1. BACKGROUND.....	4
2. NEED.....	4
3. OBJECTIVES	5
4. METHODS.....	5
5. RESULTS & DISCUSSION	7
6. BENEFITS	7
7. FURTHER DEVELOPMENT	7
8. PLANNED OUTCOMES.....	7
9. CONCLUSIONS	8
10. APPENDICES.....	8
10.1. <i>Appendix 1 - Intellectual Property</i>	8
10.2. <i>Appendix 2 - Staff</i>	8
10.3. <i>Appendix 3 – Attachments to this report</i>	8

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

2004/311 Development of the Strategic Research Plan for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Conservation in New South Wales, 2004-2009

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr Steven J. Kennelly

ADDRESS: NSW Department of Primary Industries
 Cronulla Fisheries Centre
 PO Box 21
 Cronulla, NSW, 2230
 Telephone: 02 9527 8411 Fax: 02 9527 8576

OBJECTIVES:

1. Consult with all appropriate stakeholding groups to identify research areas that require attention.
2. Rationalise the list of priority areas of research into one document.
3. Consult again with all stakeholding groups to obtain their priorities on each other's priorities.
4. Insert explanatory text into the document and re-distribute a draft plan to all groups.
5. Publish the document and make it available on the WEB so that continuous updates can be incorporated as the various stakeholding groups modify their priorities.

NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY:

Scientific research programs that adhere to world's best practice standards are required to underpin all our management strategies and the regulations that govern how we use and conserve our aquatic resources. In deciding how to apportion the resources available for research, the involvement of all stakeholders in identifying priorities is paramount. This project has provided a comprehensive document entitled "*Planning Strategic Research for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Conservation in New South Wales, 2004-2009*" based on the contributions of all relevant stakeholders from the various commercial, recreational, Indigenous, aquaculture, marketing, government and university sectors in NSW.

Outcomes Achieved

Thirty three different stakeholding groups within NSW were consulted to identify research areas that require attention and the resulting list of research areas were combined and re-circulated so all stakeholder groups had an opportunity to prioritise each others' research areas in addition to their own. 234 different research areas were identified as requiring attention and these have been summarised in the document entitled "*Planning Strategic Research for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Conservation in New South Wales, 2004-2009*".

"*Planning Strategic Research for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Conservation in New South Wales, 2004-2009*" has been published as a hard copy document and is also available on the NSW Department of Primary Industries web (www.dpi.nsw.gov.au). The document provides a focused approach for research providers in doing projects that are of a high priority to appropriate stakeholders in NSW and provides a mechanism to ensure that future research is addressed in a coordinated, focused and responsive manner that underpins the needs of all stakeholders. The document also provides a tool that funders of research can use to identify the best way to invest in research on fisheries, aquaculture and aquatic conservation in NSW. This tool shows which

stakeholder groups hold particular priorities as important so funders can see whose priorities particular projects will be addressing.

"Planning Strategic Research for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Conservation in New South Wales, 2004-2009" is a 'living' resource and will be regularly updated on the website as priorities change in the light of new research being completed, new questions being formulated and new feedback being received from stakeholders. A complete revision will be done in 2007.

KEYWORDS:

strategic planning

1. BACKGROUND

Decision-makers who manage fisheries, aquaculture and aquatic conservation receive advice from many stakeholders, interest groups and experts. Whilst such advice and opinions come from industry, recreational, Indigenous, environmental and political groups, the most influential information upon which decisions are made usually comes from rigorous, objective science. That is, decision-makers require answers to complex, difficult questions about fisheries, aquaculture and aquatic conservation that need the “best available scientific information”. Because scientific research ultimately provides this scientific information, its future direction is one of the most important factors in framing future management policies and laws.

The questions that are asked of fisheries science are always far greater in number and scope than can be readily answered – particularly in a state like New South Wales with relatively small commercial fishing and aquaculture industries, and therefore relatively few resources available for their scientific study. Unfortunately, however, the questions that require answering about our aquatic resources and systems do not adhere to this minimalist pattern but are almost as large in number and scope as those questions asked in regions with very valuable fisheries and, therefore, much greater resources available for research. The range and complexity of the questions asked by NSW stakeholders in fisheries, aquaculture and aquatic conservation mean that resources for research will always be a limiting factor in determining what can be achieved and, therefore, there will always be a need to direct available scientific resources towards those questions that are of the highest priority to answer.

Deciding which are the most important questions to answer, and how to answer them, are key processes in shaping future fisheries research and, ultimately, future fisheries management. The latter process (how to answer high priority questions) is usually accepted as being best done by professional scientists because they are trained to be objective, impartial and to base their interpretations on rigorous analyses of available evidence. It is also well-accepted, however, that the best group(s) to lead the former process (the prioritisation of which questions should be answered) should NOT be scientists – but rather the end-users of the research results and potential beneficiaries, i.e. the stakeholders and decision-makers themselves. This is because these groups are in the best position to decide which areas of inquiry would contribute to decisions that would lead to the greatest improvement in the particular “stakes” in which they have a “holding”.

2. NEED

In 1998, the NSW Advisory Council on Fisheries Research (ACFR - the former Fisheries Research Advisory Body for NSW) published the “*Strategic Plan for Research on the Fisheries Resources of NSW, 1998-2002*”. This document expired in 2002 so the need arose for an updated strategic research plan for NSW which could be used to guide research planning and investment for NSW's fisheries, aquaculture and aquatic conservation. This project (FRDC 2004/311) provided some additional funding required to complete the final document.

3. OBJECTIVES

1. Consult with all appropriate stakeholding groups to identify research areas that require attention.
2. Rationalise the list of priority areas of research into one document.
3. Consult again with all stakeholding groups to obtain their priorities on each other's priorities.
4. Insert explanatory text into the document and re-distribute a draft plan to all groups.
5. Publish the document and make it available on the WEB so that continuous updates can be incorporated as the various stakeholding groups modify their priorities.

4. METHODS

In 2002, following a key meeting between the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC), the NSW Seafood Industry Council (NSWSIC), the NSW Fisheries Research Advisory Body (NSW FRAB), and NSW Fisheries undertook to develop a new strategic research planning document that adopted a new and innovative approach involving the exhaustive contribution of research priorities from all stakeholder groups. This process involved meetings with, and submissions to and from, NSW's many Management Advisory Committees (MACs), Advisory Councils and a variety of other stakeholding groups (refer to Table 1).

The priority research areas that were identified by each of the stakeholding groups were combined into a spreadsheet and redistributed to each of the stakeholder groups that contributed to the document so they had an opportunity to prioritise each others' research areas in addition to their own. After some combination / splitting / rationalisation of terms etc., the resulting list of 234 priority areas were grouped into appropriate categories and sub-categories and a summary was written about each broad area. Further, it was identified where work is already being done on particular subjects. The resultant draft document was re-distributed to all stakeholders for additional comment, was revised according to the advice received from the stakeholding groups and then published as a hard copy document and lodged on the NSW Department of Primary Industries web site.

Table 1. Stakeholding groups that contributed to the development of the strategic research plan.

Stakeholding Group	Acronym
Abalone Management Advisory Committee	ABMAC
Estuary General Management Advisory Committee	EGMAC
Estuary Prawn Trawl Management Advisory Committee	EPTMAC
Inland Management Advisory Committee	Inland MAC
Lobster Management Advisory Committee	LOBMAC
Ocean Fish Trawl Management Advisory Committee	OFTMAC
Ocean Haul Management Advisory Committee	OHAULMAC
Ocean Prawn Trawl Management Advisory Committee	OPTMAC
Ocean Trap & Line Management Advisory Committee	OT&LMAC
Advisory Council on Commercial Fishing	ACCF
Advisory Council on Fisheries Conservation	ACFC
Advisory Council on Aquaculture	ACoA
Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing	ACoRF
Fisheries Resource Conservation Assessment Council	FRCAC
Indigenous Fisheries Strategy Indigenous Advisory Committee	IFSIAC
Marine Park Advisory Council	MPAC
Aquaculture Industry Groups	Aqua. Ind. Gps
Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Commission	ATSIC
Australian Museum	AM
Catchment Management Authorities	CMA
Environment Protection Authority	EPA
Fisheries Research and Development Corporation	FRDC
Fisheries Scientific Committee	FSC
Indigenous Fisheries Strategy Implementation Plan	IFSIP
Master Fish Merchants' Association	MFMA
Murray Darling Basin Commission	MDBC
National Parks & Wildlife Service	NPWS
Nature Conservation Council	NCC
NSW Aboriginal Lands Council	NSWALC
NSW Aquatic Ecology Research Programme	NSWAERP
NSW Department of Primary Industries	NSWDPI
NSW Fisheries Research Advisory Body	NSW FRAB
Oyster Research Advisory Committee	ORAC
Seafood Industry Advisory Forum	SIAF

5. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

33 different stakeholder groups were consulted and 234 different research areas were identified as requiring attention. A document entitled "*Planning Strategic Research for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Conservation in New South Wales, 2004-2009*" summarises the results of the consultation process and outlines the broad priority areas that were identified. The document concentrates on identifying and discussing those research priorities that stakeholders have identified for wild harvest fisheries, aquaculture and aquatic conservation in NSW and the basic sorts of scientific inquiry that would be required to achieve them.

The document has been published and is provided as an attachment to this report. The information is also available on the NSW Department of Primary Industries web site (www.dpi.nsw.gov.au) where it will reside as a 'living' resource to be updated as priorities change in the light of new research being completed, new questions being formulated and new feedback being received from stakeholders.

6. BENEFITS

"*Planning Strategic Research for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Conservation in New South Wales, 2004-2009*" provides a focused approach for research providers in doing projects that are of a high priority to appropriate stakeholders in NSW and provides a mechanism to ensure that future research is addressed in a coordinated, focused and responsive manner and underpins the needs of management. The document also provides a tool that funders of research can use to identify the best way to invest in research on fisheries, aquaculture and aquatic conservation in NSW. This tool will show which stakeholder groups hold particular priorities as important so funders can see whose priorities particular projects will be addressing.

7. FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The document is a 'living' resource and will be regularly updated on the website as priorities change in the light of new research being completed, new questions being formulated and new feedback being received from stakeholders. A complete revision will be done in 2007.

8. PLANNED OUTCOMES

The document will be used by research providers and funders to evaluate what research projects should be done and which stakeholder groups will be satisfied as a result of particular projects being done. As such, the overall outcome of the plan will be the completion of research projects that meet the needs for the many stakeholders in the fisheries resources, aquaculture and aquatic conservation issues of NSW.

9. CONCLUSIONS

The final document entitled "*Planning Strategic Research for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Conservation in New South Wales, 2004-2009*" has now been published and is available on the NSW Department of Primary Industries web (www.dpi.nsw.gov.au).

10. APPENDICES

10.1. Appendix 1 - Intellectual Property

There are no intellectual property issues associated with this project.

10.2. Appendix 2 - Staff

Dr Steve Kennelly	Chief Scientist and Director of Primary Industries Systems Research
Ms Tracey McVea	Executive Officer

10.3. Appendix 3 – Attachments to this report

Please refer to the attached published document entitled: "*Planning Strategic Research for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Conservation in New South Wales, 2004-2009*".